

New Zealand's Input on the Zero Draft Ministerial Declaration for UNEA-5.2

23/11/2021

To UNEP Secretariat and Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the zero draft Ministerial Declaration for the resumed Fifth UN Environment Assembly, "Strengthening actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".

New Zealand will welcome a text that underscores the need to ensure a green recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic. The zero draft provides a strong basis to provide a clear message on the importance of prioritised action as we collectively respond to the triple crises. Our comments by section are provided below.

Preambular Section

We welcome in PP3 the expression of profound concern for the fundamental environmental crises we are facing, including the manner in which these crises are interlinked. We agree with the inclusion of a positive statement on the strength of efforts to identify solutions in PP4. We support the intent of PP5 and suggest inclusion of language that more closely aligns with the IPBES Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics Report.

PP5 We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, as well as on economies and societies, further threatening our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and are aware that we face recurring risks of future pandemics if **the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change are not sufficiently addressed. we maintain the current patterns of interaction with nature.**

We suggest an editorial amendment to PP6:

PP6 We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and **that we** could have the opportunity to achieve more by policies and investments that address several environmental challenges simultaneously through innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature.

Operative Section

An editorial note: the Operative Section begins at OP8 rather than OP1. Our references in this letter refer to the numbers as drafted by the Presidency in the zero draft.

New Zealand welcomes the commitment to support a green and just recovery from COVID-19 in OP8. We have a minor editorial amendment:

OP8 We commit to supporting a green and just recovery, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, contributing to poverty eradication, by mainstreaming environmental concerns into all policies and tools promoting economic recovery; making use of green economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and knowledge-based management, and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change in line with the Paris Agreement.

A further editorial amendment in OP9 for clarity:

OP9 We commit to working across sectors and levels of government to halt the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of ecosystems, focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity, through sustainable land use, effectively managing protected areas, safeguarding especially vulnerable habitats, types of nature and eco-systems, and addressing illegal deforestation and wildlife trade, illegal mining, and other crimes that have serious impacts on the environment.

We support the inclusion of language on a rethought approach to the use and management of nature and its resources in OP10 and welcome the articulation of means to promote and strengthen nature-based solutions in OP11.

We suggest the wording in OP12 more closely reflect the Secretary-General's call to action from the UN Food Systems Summit. Our first preference would be for it to remove reference to 'our' and use 'shift' or 'improve' food systems. We consider the reference to freshwater should be to "degradation" and not "use". We also suggest the reference to inclusive food systems includes language to enhance indigenous leadership in food systems, as this was also a key theme of the Secretary-General's call to action.

OP12 We commit to cooperate across sectors and levels of government to ~~transform our shift/improve~~ food systems, inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit vision of sustainable and inclusive food systems, including indigenous food systems, that deliver enhanced food security and resilience while reducing emissions, biodiversity loss and freshwater use degradation, as an essential solution to accelerate actions on all the Sustainable Development Goals, and we underline the natural role of UNEP in the Summit follow-up processes.

New Zealand recognises the importance of comprehensive land use planning as referenced in OP13 and we support the commitment to safeguarding the ocean. We would prefer "ocean" (singular) in OP14 to reflect one interconnected ocean and an amendment to "ocean temperature rise" to better reflect IPCC terminology:

OP14 We commit to safeguarding life under water, and a clean, healthy, and productive ocean capable of providing food, livelihoods, and storing carbon, through strengthening efforts to sustainably manage ~~all~~ our oceans, as well as by

sustainably using and protecting **the oceans**, seas and coastal ecosystems, while acting to prevent pollution, and prevent **marine ocean** temperature rise and ocean acidification, by keeping our efforts in line with the Paris **A**greement.

My delegation is available to discuss this feedback or any matters arising from it at your convenience and we reiterate our support to the Presidency to ensure a productive and forward looking outcome from UNEA-5.2. We look forward to reviewing the revised draft as we draw closer to UNEA-5.2.